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GENERAL DEBATE

Letter dated 4 October 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the reply of the delegation of Burundi to the statement made on Friday, 4 October 1996, by Mr. Benjamin William Mkapa, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 9.

(Signed) Nsanze TERENCE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Reply of the delegation of Burundi to the statement concerning the situation in Burundi made on 4 October 1996 by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session

The delegation of Burundi to the fifty-first session of the General Assembly listened with interest to the statement - particularly the references to Burundi - made this morning, 4 October 1996, by Mr. Benjamin William Mkapa, President of the United Republic of Tanzania.

The delegation of Burundi wishes to express its sincere gratitude to the United Republic of Tanzania for its willingness to help the people of Burundi to overcome the crisis and pursue efforts to achieve peace and security in the entire Great Lakes region.

The delegation of Burundi nevertheless feels compelled to provide the General Assembly with some necessary clarifications regarding the requirements laid down by neighbouring countries at the Arusha summit meeting, held on 31 July 1996, and at the same time to point out that these requirements have been satisfied in full.

The requirements concerned the following points:

1. Restoration of the National Assembly;

2. Restoration of the activities of political parties;

3. Dialogue with armed groups.

In its statement of 1 October 1996 to the General Assembly, the delegation of Burundi clearly indicated that the Parliament and political parties had been reinstated by decree No. 100/023 of 13 September 1996. It also reiterated the Burundian Government's firm and solemn commitment to a dialogue and a discussion of all of the country's fundamental issues with all the political partners concerned, including armed factions, without exception.

All these measures were brought to the attention of the heads of State of the region, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the Security Council and the supreme body of our Organization, the General Assembly.

In this connection, reference should be made to the letter dated 25 September 1996 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (A/51/409-S/1996/788).

The Government of Burundi believes that it has met the requirements laid down by its neighbouring countries. It therefore reiterates its urgent request

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that those countries immediately lift the embargo that was unjustly and illegally imposed against Burundi. Such a decision would help to alleviate the indescribable suffering of all segments of its population, whose vulnerability has been greatly increased by three years of war, and would at the same time facilitate the establishment of a dialogue, particularly by opening up land, sea and air routes.